



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Coming back home to Central Goldfields**

Like a lot of young people growing up in a country town, Katrina Fox (nee Lovett) was excited to leave the familiar streets of Maryborough behind for the big city.

It wasn't until a move from Sydney to Melbourne just before the pandemic hit in 2020 that Kat, her husband Graham and two children found themselves back in the Central Goldfields, and loving it.

As part of the Welcome to Central Goldfields project, which aims to attract skilled migrants to the Shire, we've caught up with locals who have moved to Maryborough and surrounds to understand their experiences.

But what's it like to move back to the Central Goldfields after 25 years?

"It was great growing up here, you were two minutes from everything and you had a relatively free existence compared to a big city- we could walk to school, we had something on every night and had friends who lived right across the street from us.

"Everything and nothing has changed since I left."

Kat moved to Melbourne for university when she was 18 and then on to Sydney, where she lived for the past 15 years.

While in Sydney Kat met her American husband Graham and in 2020, the family decided to move back to Victoria.

"When we had our daughter, unbeknown to us, it was just before the start of COVID, so we decided to move to Melbourne. We arrived at my parent's house in Maryborough two days before lockdown started.

"We had intended to buy a house in Melbourne, but after lockdown ended we decided to stay in Maryborough.

"While this was not by design, it's worked well. The community has welcomed me back and have really embraced Graham as well.

"There's so many things to love about living in Maryborough and the Central Goldfields, but the community is certainly one of them.

“Raising kids here is amazing, they’re close to their cousins, we can walk to day care and kinder and knowing the people who are educating them is really nice. We’re certainly not missing traffic and peak hour either. We’re really loving it.”

Originally from Santa Barbara, California, Graham lived in Sydney for nearly 10 years before moving to Maryborough, and he wouldn’t change a thing.

“While we were caught up in the hustle and bustle of city life, it wasn't until we got out to the fresh country air to realise that life is great in a smaller town.

“The convenience of everyday life means we can spend more time on things we enjoy, like quality time with the kids, rather than being stuck in the car running to and fro. Having a garden has also been a great way to get outside and spend time together.

“One of the starkest contrasts that always makes me smile is people don't honk in the street, they wave.”

While COVID put a spanner in Kat and Graham’s plans, it also presented opportunities they had not previously had.

“We are very fortunate that we get to do city jobs in a country location, which only became an option due to the pandemic.

“Companies are obviously trying to navigate that shift, with regional areas further experiencing skills shortages - which is why projects such as Welcome to Central Goldfields are a great idea.”

A 12-month pilot - Welcome to Central Goldfields - is in response to staff and skills shortages that are affecting businesses big and small, it’s also an opportunity for the Shire to become more culturally diverse- something Kat and Graham welcomed.

“Being exposed to different cultures and backgrounds is a great thing.”

To find out more about the Welcome to Central Goldfields project, visit [www.engage.cgoldshire.vic.gov.au/welcometocentralgoldfields](http://www.engage.cgoldshire.vic.gov.au/welcometocentralgoldfields)

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**For more information and interviews contact Central Goldfields Shire Council Digital Communications Officer Angela Tucker on 0492 446 016.**